

Good Evening CPC Board members...

My name is Steve Maguire and I live on 14 Foxwell Lane here in Scituate. I am here tonight to ask you to strongly consider not appropriating CPC funds for the SHS synthetic fields project. To clarify, I am specifically asking NOT to fund synthetic turf for what are now the multiple grass fields on the SHS property. I fully support replacing the current SHS track and field turf, (which are both a part of the town's current proposed Capital Plan budget from the general fund) This current turf and track are already synthetic and that space has already been altered from its natural state.

From personal experience; For the last 18 years, I have walked, birded and observed wildlife in, on and around the natural fields and trees that are currently being proposed to be removed and replaced by synthetic turf. The current plan to make those natural grass fields into synthetic turf, while also removing part of the existing tree line, **is going to absolutely devastate the wildlife in that area.** I will say, I appreciate and respect the proposed plan's idea of creating natural berms from the topsoil and replanting some trees. However, the square footage of those berms and new trees will not come close to what the square footage of the current open natural fields and woods is now.

As a CPC, I'm sure environmental stewardship is of the utmost importance to you. Those current natural fields and woods are home territory and critical migration feeding areas to multiple wildlife in that area; including and certainly not limited to; White-tailed Deer, multiple species of hawks, and countless songbirds. Migrating species such as Savannah Sparrow, Killdeer and American Robin, use these spaces as a critical stop over areas as well. I have observed all of these animals and many more on those fields. While none of those animals I have listed are designated as endangered or threatened, does it really take one of those statuses to have to protect their home and space? This may seem like a small parcel of land and trees to us, but to some of these animals it is much more than that. **This synthetic turf is going to permanently scar this beautiful open space of grass and trees because attempting to remove this turf, once it is put in place, would take decades for that area to naturally recover.** There really is "no going back" once this is done.

Those current natural grass fields and woods are also located snugly between two marked established wetland areas. The filtering of the rain water, through the synthetic turf/rubber tire crumbs and the runoff of the synthetic fibers as they age; will most definitely impact these wetlands particularly the one to the west of one of the fields proposed.

As a one possible solution; \*I know this is probably not under the premise of your group \* instead of going immediately to turf, have we considered increasing the funding for DPW to have one or two staff that are dedicated to field maintenance and increasing funding for seeding and topdressing all fields when needed. If we took ½ of the proposed budget for the current complex (\$5,000,000.00) and budgeted that out over 20 years @ \$250,000 a year, that would be more than enough to hire the workers and fix and maintain these fields. In that same 20 years we will have to replace this synthetic turf 3 times over; at the expense of millions of more dollars. I know the push back on this idea is BOS Policy #48-15 (The new irrigation system policy that was implemented in 2015) Commercial agricultural entities are exempt from Policy # 48-15 and I would hope the town we be willing to amend that policy to add athletic field irrigation systems as well. I just don't think we are vetting this process as much as we can in the most earth friendly way possible and we going for the quick fix at the literal cost of woods and wildlife.

**To quote directly from part of the "Key Findings Section" of the Athletic Field Analysis that was of part of the CPC Fiscal Year 2019 Approved projects... Part of key Finding #5 reads: A regular maintenance**

**plan allows for more reasonable funding requests as opposed to larger requests in long-term intervals.**

In closing... I completely understand the need for these fields. I have four of my own children that participate in youth sports. I understand the Title IX compliance issue to a certain extent, but nowhere in title IX does it say that we need to make the fields equal by making them synthetic turf. They can be just as equal access when they are grass. I understand the current fields may be in tough shape. However, NONE of those issues are the current open natural space, wildlife's or tree's responsibility. Those are the victims that will pay the ultimate price for this. We have destroyed enough green space in town in the last multiple years and I greatly hope you will consider "preserving", as your group is named, this open space and keeping it natural by not dedicating any CPC money toward this project. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Stephen Maguire

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Dear Sirs and Madams,

We are writing in regards to the planned Scituate High School athletic field renovation project and the opinions of Scituate Little League on the matter. We are well-versed in the needs of the town and the school insofar as the degrading track, the turf that is well past its useful lifetime, and the Title IX issue that absolutely needs to be addressed.

We have spent many hours and several meetings discussing this issue, and we regret to admit that at present we are unable to reach a consensus to support the project as we currently understand it.

While we want to be good town partners and support efforts that may benefit the town as a whole in the long run, even if we as an organization do not stand to benefit as much from them as other programs, we have significant concerns about developing new synthetic turf fields that our participants and our own children will spend countless hours on that may use the widely publicized and often decried "crumb rubber" infill material, which contains numerous toxins - heavy metals, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), and known-carcinogens.

There seems to be no scientific consensus yet as to the absolute safety of children playing on surfaces constructed of these arguably hazardous materials. Some studies have been conducted, many sponsored by the turf and rubber industries, claiming there is minimal risk to youth playing on these surfaces. Other groups, most notably Environmental and Human Health, Inc., point out inadequacies in the studies used to arrive at those conclusions. Clustering of some cancers, including non-Hodgkin's and Hodgkin's lymphomas, has been observed among youth athletes (in particular, soccer goalies who spend a disproportionate amount of time closest to the turf), and of course there is a study that purports that the clustering is not abnormal to the region and demographics in which it was observed. Ultimately, we may not know the true risks of these types of fields for many years to come, if ever, but we feel strongly that the risks are not small considering what is at stake and the availability of safer alternatives, including cork and coconut, silica or Durafill sand, and of course natural grass.

We also feel, due to the lack of convincing evidence as to the safety of fields built with these materials, that it quite simply may not be wise to invest millions of dollars, not just to replace one existing synthetic field, but to expand this potentially hazardous footprint by building additional synthetic fields, while other communities across the country (including close neighbors Westport and Hartford CT, who also seek a statewide ban) and other countries entirely (e.g. Italy, Norway, Australia, and the Netherlands) are actively working to ban these types of fields, seeking moratoriums or restrictions on their use or construction, or have already banned them outright. Whether such bans are appropriate or misguided, justified or reactionary, we don't feel the onus should be on parents, who just want to watch their children play sports, to prove that these surfaces are harmful, but on manufacturers, who stand to profit from their sale, and those who sponsor them to prove that they are safe. "In the science world, the "precautionary principle" dictates that if a product raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. With clear scientific evidence available that shredded tires contain hazardous materials, their use on school grounds, public playgrounds and other facilities should be avoided, especially in areas where small children can be found." (from [cleanwateraction.org](http://cleanwateraction.org)).

As an organization, we are very hesitant about this project potentially utilizing crumb rubber infill, and would be most appreciative of any efforts to investigate less toxic materials that may

be used to construct a natural or synthetic turf field that our children will spend countless hours competing on, whether for organized sports, middle and high school gym class, or general recreation. As we understand it, the cost difference may be relatively small when compared with the total cost of the overall project, and certainly not greater than the price we would place on our children's health and safety in the face of a demonstrably more toxic alternative that may represent a significant health risk at best, despite offering tire manufacturers a convenient way to dispose of this toxic waste.

It is also common for synthetic turf fields to require the use of numerous herbicides and biocides, which pose significant health risks of their own, in order to control crab grass or other weeds as well as bacterial growth. We also recognize there are other widely held environmental concerns about the installation of such a field, however, the use of crumb rubber has been our greatest reservation, and what has largely prevented us from offering our public support for the project. We would like to work with the town, the school, and the recreation department on a plan that would address these concerns, and would gladly offer our full support if we can arrive at a mutually agreeable solution.

Please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Kind regards,

Board of Directors  
Scituate Little League

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CC: Scituate Recreation Department  
Scituate School Committee  
Scituate Community Preservation Committee  
Scituate Advisory Board